

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 8 are amended and claims 9-14 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the features recited therein. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,808,254 B2 to Sakaida et al. (hereinafter "Sakaida"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts on page 3 that Sakaida discloses sintered members "spaced from an outermost one of the individual electrodes with respect to an arrangement direction of the plurality of individual electrodes, in an outward direction," similar to the feature recited in claim 1 of the invention. The Office Action cites Fig. 5b of Sakaida, reading the outer electrodes corresponding to chambers 17c of the figure as sintered members. Applicant believes this interpretation of Sakaida is in error. Sakaida discloses that items 17c are ink compression chambers that are aligned in six columns (A-F) that extend in parallel in the lengthwise direction of the base plate 17 (Figs. 5a and 5b and col. 7, lines 26-32 of the specification). Sakaida further teaches a device where there is a one-to-one correspondence between drive electrodes 36 and the ink pressure chambers 17c so that each ink pressure chamber is driven by a separate drive electrode 36 (e.g., col. 8, lines 40-44 of the specification).

In contrast, the claimed invention includes "one or more sintered members at positions other than positions corresponding to the pressure chambers and that are, on the surface of the piezoelectric element provided with the plurality of individual electrodes, spaced from an outermost one of the individual electrodes with respect to an arrangement direction of the plurality of individual electrodes, in an outward direction from the plurality of individual

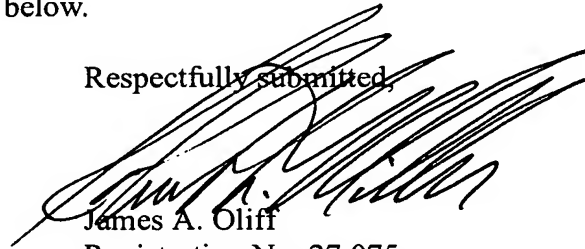
electrodes," as recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claim 8. The claimed invention, therefore, recites features including sintered members, or, as described in the specification, dummy electrodes 35d, that are formed on the surface of the piezoelectric element and arranged in a pattern around the individual electrodes 35, but which do not operate a pressure chamber 10 (e.g., [0072] and [0073] of the specification). Sakaida does disclose the use of dummy pattern electrodes 35', but the dummy pattern electrodes are used only as reinforcement of the piezoelectric sheets to prevent bending of the piezoelectric sheets during lamination (see col. 9, lines 3-13). Sakaida does not teach, disclose or suggest the use of sintered members or dummy electrodes arranged in a pattern around the individual electrodes, with the sinter members or dummy electrodes "at positions other than positions corresponding to the pressure chambers." Sakaida further does not teach, disclose or suggest an ink jet head where the "sintered members and the individual electrodes have substantially the same individual stress characteristics relative to the piezoelectric elements," as recited in claim 8.

For at least this reason, claims 1 and 8 are patentably distinct from the applied art. Further, claims 2-7, depending from claim 1, are also allowable for the reasons discussed, as well as the additional features recited therein. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-8 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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